



News from **SALEM COUNTY** Office of Public Information

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SALEM COUNTY STORM DAMAGE UPDATE-AUGUST 16, 2011: A STATE OF EMERGENCY

(SALEM, NJ)—Freeholder Bruce Bobbitt, Chair of the County Public Works Committee, Freeholder Dale Cross, Chair of the County Health Committee, and Deputy Director David Lindenmuth today announced the County's progress in dealing with the effects of this past Sunday's rain event.

"Our public works department has been working tirelessly to effectively manage the damaging effects from this past Sunday's weather," said Freeholder Bobbitt. "We still have a number of roads closed throughout the County. In total, 14 roadways, 9 bridges and culverts, along with our rail line near the Oldman's trestle, were damaged by Sunday's significant rain fall. Our initial estimates are that the cost to the County transportation infrastructure is approximately 3.7 million dollars. We will be working with our local, state, and federal partners to recuperate some of this money from emergency aid available through the federal government."

The Board of Chosen Freeholders will be considering several resolutions at their regular meeting on August 17, 2011 to address the effects of the storm. Under New Jersey statutes, the Freeholders can adopt a resolution authorizing special emergency appropriations to cover the cost of the extraordinary expenses. The costs will be funded through a combination of short and long term financing. Any state and/or federal aid will be on the reimbursable basis and will be used exclusively to pay for the debt that is issued. Additionally, because a State of Emergency has been declared in Salem County, the County government is granted flexibility in the awarding of contracts and bypassing traditional bidding methods. The County Engineering and Public Works Departments are currently working to determine what projects can be accomplished using in-house labor and what will require the use of a vendor.

The following is a list of the County roadways which have closures as a result of Sunday's storm: Bridgeton Road, Olivet Road, Almond Road, Burlington Road, and Greenville Road.

"Our families and businesses utilize our transportation infrastructure; while our first priority is always on public safety, we also know that we need to re-open damaged roadways as quickly as possible," said Freeholder Bobbitt. "We are also in the midst of evaluating every County bridge and dam to ensure that they are stable and in good



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working order. It is our goal to keep ahead of circumstances before they become emergencies.”

Emergency Management Officials continue to work with Cumberland and Gloucester Counties, along with local officials, to coordinate the response to continuing changing conditions. Additionally, the application for federal aid requires that a total of 11 million dollars of combined funding requests be submitted by the State to the Federal Government.

“The Freeholders are working with our Third District Legislators to request that the Governor declare a State of Emergency, so that we can request federal funding,” said Deputy Director David Lindenmuth. “Under FEMA guidelines, if the Governor and President approve the declaration, Salem County, and our municipalities, would be eligible to receive up to 75% reimbursement of the costs associated with the first 48 hours of the weather event.”

In addition to the transportation infrastructure, the County Health Department is also working with regional partners to ensure that the problems that could occur as a result of flooding will be mitigated by a proactive and effective response.

“We are actively monitoring any effect this storm may have on public health,” said Freeholder Dale Cross, Chair of the County Health Department. “As a precaution, our Health Department is working to monitor the safety of drinking water through selected well-testing and is distributing information to the public on preventive measures.”

The County remains in a State of Emergency. Emergency Management Officials will reevaluate the status of the County after 24-hours.